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## Exercise Design: Scheduling Evaluation Meetings between Exercise Play Sessions

### SUMMARY

Exercise planners should consider scheduling evaluation meetings between sessions of exercise play. These meetings can enable participants to identify problem areas and improve emergency response efforts in later segments of the exercise.

### DESCRIPTION

In April 2004, members of the University of Denver Homeland Security Program and the Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management coordinated "Exercise Team Spirit," an air-disaster exercise simulating the destruction of two passenger planes outside Denver, Colorado. To give participants time to examine their emergency response efforts and to facilitate the learning process, simulation play was divided into two segments conducted on April 15 and April 22. Between these two segments, exercise planners organized evaluation meetings, such as hotwash debriefings, breakout sessions, and interim planning meetings, designed to increase participants' situational awareness and improve their simulation play.

While not a typical element of exercise design, the week-long break in action led to improved play during the April 22 session. For example, during an April 19 interim meeting, the simulation's incident commanders (ICs) determined that local emergency response procedures had not allowed for effective coordination of resources during the April 15 exercise segment. The ICs then established a multi-agency coordination (MAC) group to improve participants' resource management. Using the MAC model on April 22, players were able to continue the response and recovery effort without experiencing any major resource shortages. Team Spirit was thus able to identify weaknesses and test recommended action items for improvement within the same exercise.

Exercise planners should consider scheduling evaluation meetings between sessions of exercise play. These meetings can enable participants to identify problem areas and improve emergency response efforts in later segments of the exercise.

### CITATION

- Jefferson County, Colorado Office of Emergency Management. *After-Action Report: Exercise Team Spirit: Response to an Air Disaster*. 24 July 2004. ([LLIS.gov](http://LLIS.gov) ID# 12105)

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